

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

EXPLORATION OF PAHANG.

*Extract from a letter from Mr. W. Cameron to H. E.
the Acting Governor (the Hon'ble Cecil C. Smith,
C.M.G.) dated 4th September, 1885.*

I have had a very successful expedition this time, and think it is the most complete and comprehensive piece of exploring I have done yet, as well as one likely to lead to practical results.

I have discovered Pahang to be a much larger territory than even I imagined, and I always knew it to be larger than was generally supposed. It impinges right up to the Ulu of the Kinta and the Raia close into Pêrak just as it does at Ginting Bidei, and there is no intermediate nobody's land, except that this portion is totally unknown even to the Pahangites or to any Malays. There is in this place a sort of central hill country, a sort of vortex in the mountains, where for a wide area we have gentle slopes and *pamah* (plateau) land, with rounded hills shut in all round by loftier ranges but which from the mean elevation of this vortex appear comparatively low, but the mean of the valley for many miles is 4,500 to 4,750 feet above sea level by aneroid. Streams of considerable size glide along easily from all around and go to feed one large stream eventually, and this is the Telom—the real Ulu of the Jêlei. I ascended one mountain at the N. E. corner

of this central land and looked down on the N. E. side to the real Ulu (upper reaches) of the Kēlantān, further east again behind a lofty range, Pahang, octopus-like, shoots out another arm to the north impinging on Kēlantān. The mountain which I ascended was 6,300 feet by aneroid, probably considerably higher real altitude, and stands in somewhere about $4^{\circ} 38'$ North Latitude 10 degrees north of east. Of this a lofty mountain range rises closing in the vortex (to continue the simile) to the East (the vortex being the Telom). This lofty range I estimated to be over 8,000 feet, perhaps considerably more. I dared not ascend it, for, not knowing what stream or system of streams I was on, I was obliged to hold on to the watershed till it brought me right into Pahang known. I had no one who could give me any information, and the Sakeis all fled before us, so that I had to be my own guide, and thus, as I say, was tied to this watershed till I could make sure what it was, as I felt certain it would settle the question of the central watershed about which there have been various conjectures, and it has solved the question, at least up to this point and a good way north of it.

We had rather a trying time of it, owing to the fearful rains. Colds, fevers and rheumatism were our constant companions, and my men suffered very much.

I hope that I may have an opportunity of placing some of the results of this expedition more fully before you, and thanking you for your kind wishes.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM CAMERON.

P.S.—I was fortunate enough to obtain particularly interesting geological data, of which I have brought many specimens and made copious notes. I should have stated generally that my route was up the Raia which I explored, the Ulu

(upper reaches) being unknown, as well as the Penoh which is an *anak* (tributary) of the Kinta. I crossed a mountain by a pass 5,300 feet by aneroid lying exactly at the Ulu of the Kinta, Penoh and Telom. This I have called Gunho Pass. I took the elephants over with me, explored this new country and followed the Telom till I got to within a day's sail of the place where it joins the Jêlei. Long ere this all our stores but rice had been exhausted, so for the purpose of obtaining supplies, and also because a rumour had got abroad in Pahang that I was a *musoh* (enemy) with forty elephants and four hundred men come down to harry and to raid, I had to reassure the authorities: I went down to the Toh Kaya's and to Pênjum by sampan, then back again and then crossed southerly all the rivers of Upper Pahang, keeping close to the foot of the main ranges, and coming out over mountains 5,000 feet high at the Ulu of a tributary of the Slim, and thence on to Bernam.

I have reason to thank the Great Master that I was enabled under his protection to bring my men back alive, although I cannot say well, for I on several occasions had great reason to be alarmed and feared some would succumb; there are several of them now under treatment, and one I left in the hospital at Penang.

The elephants, I am happy to say, notwithstanding the unprecedented fatigue, are well and in fair condition. By this time they will be pretty strong, for I left them at the Ulu of Sungkei to feed and rest eight days ago, and they will soon be in good condition. I am starting the relief party back again to-day by way of the Pêrak river and Batu Gâjah and I propose taking a run down to Singapore for a day to get some outfit which cannot be procured here, when I shall do myself the honour of calling on you, but I must start my party first and I will meet them at the Bernam almost as soon as they can get there, as we are taking an additional elephant.

W. C.
